

**Kathryn Weare's
Electricity Shopping Tips for Medium Class Consumers
Spring 2005**

Look for a Provider with a track record.

- Look for someone with some kind of track record – perhaps a couple years worth of sales to other accounts in New England or elsewhere.
- Pay attention to providers that are recommended by your chamber or trade association.

Consider when to buy.

- Listen to provider recommendations. Spring and fall can be good times to contract. Summer can be quite expensive.
- Be prepared to buy for longer or shorter periods of time depending on the market.

Know your load, and manage your load.

- You may be able to even out your load profile – by shifting some load from more expensive daytime hours to less expensive nighttime/weekend hours – which can help you save money, in some cases even if you don't install a time-of-use meter.
- Look for conservation tools or just common sense management to lower your total usage.

Spread your risk.

- Consider taking ½ or less of your load into the market at any one time, and the rest at some other point. This has the advantage that contract renewals will likely be staggered as well. I took half my load one year, half the next.

Watch out for special penalties.

- Some providers penalize you if your actual usage is not within 20% +/- (or some other similar percentage) of estimated usage. Ask your provider for more details.

Consider contract length.

- Price certainty is nice, so consider contracting for 2-3 years or so if the price and terms seem good. Some have signed 10-year contracts, but to me that's too long.